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FM AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4562
INFO RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA IMMEDIATE
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE 3520
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGVA/USMISSION GENEVA 0102
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 000146

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

SINGAPORE FOR MED/BROWNL
STATE FOR CA/OCS/EAP
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STATE FOR S/ES-O/CMS EPARRA
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STATE FOR OES/AIAG
STATE FOR REO/BKK/HOWARDH
HHS FOR OGHA
CDC ATLANTA FOR CCID AND COGH
USDA FOR APHIS

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SUBJECT: H1N1 CASES GROWING IN BRUNEI ALONG WITH CONCERN

REF: A) Bander Seri Begawan 139
B) Bander Seri Begawan 39

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) Brunei's confirmed H1N1 cases have now reach 18 and will likely continue to grow. The Government of Brunei (GoB) reversed course and issued stricter warnings regarding travel. Containment efforts are focused on Brunei's schools, including international schools. A seasonal flu strain continues to spread, especially in the schools, further complicating containment efforts. Brunei's Ministry of Health (MoH) officials have been issuing daily updates on GoB efforts to address the growing H1N1 case load, however, it was reported that the head of Brunei's Disease Control Division resigned after efforts to update the Brunei public via Twitter were not authorized. To date, no American Citizens or Embassy employees are confirmed H1N1 cases. End Summary.

BRUNEI'S GROWING NUMBER OF H1N1 CASES

2. (SBU) The number of publicly confirmed H1N1 cases have grown to 18 and continue to grow. Brunei's Ministry of Health (MoH) reports that a number of the new cases are from those in close contact with those already confirmed as H1N1 cases. Most of the confirmed cases are students, with the original confirmed cases being those students who had return from overseas (Reftel A). A few of the cases are Bruneians who have returned from cross border trips into Malaysia.

PUBLIC HEALTH

3. (SBU) The MoH revised early guidance (Reftel A) and is strongly urging the curtailment of any travel to countries with confirmed cases. This is in conjunction with a public outreach campaign asking those who have returned from overseas to limit "social interaction" for seven days following their return. Containment within the schools is the current top priority for the MoH.

Distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) is widespread. School closings, including for international schools, is also being considered. There is a strong seasonal flu strain that continues to spread in Brunei, especially in the school age population, complicating containment efforts.

COMMENT

14. (SBU) To date, no embassy personnel or American Citizens in Brunei have reported as H1N1 flu cases. The media reports of Brunei's Disease Control Division director resigning over an inability to send public health updates via Twitter was a surprise. The publicly stated reason was lack of authorization for the updates to be sent from senior ministry officials. The media's reporting of the case is unusual in Brunei's self censored press. After the public outcry over lack of information following devastating floods in March (Reftel B), how the GoB responds and the accuracy of information distributed to the public continues to be closely watched.

TODD